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Landes, Margaret W. The Philosophical Writings of Richard Burthogge. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co. 1921. Pp. xxvi + 245. \$2.

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NOTES AND NEWS

LOGIC AND ETYMOLOGY

Not so many years ago the people of a certain Pennsylvania village were accustomed to refer to some of their sidewalks as "stone boardwalks." While this etymologically absurd phrase has not become "good English," usage seems to permit this similarly incoherent expression, "a dilapidated wooden house." Etymology is not always a sufficient indication of meaning in present usage. We do not restrict the science of *morals* or *ethics* to the study of customs; neither do we employ the word *aesthetics* as the title of a chapter on sense-perception.

These commonplace reflections are suggested by Professor Laguna's discussion of the complex dilemma,¹ in which this type of argument is pronounced fallacious on the ground that the conclusion asserts a "disjunction," while all that we are justified in inferring from the premises is a *logical sum*. In this criticism, as also in the claim that the minor premise of the simple dilemma "says more than is necessary," Professor De Laguna apparently assumes that the disjunctive proposition expresses a *disjunction*; but, as Whately, Mansel, Mill, Keynes, *et al.*, have been careful to point out, the disjunctive proposition (etymology to the contrary notwithstanding) does not *disjoin* but simply *enumerates* alternatives. On this account Keynes indeed suggests that the so-called disjunctive proposition might better be denominated an *alternative proposition*, except in the special case in which the alternatives are mutually exclusive. And if the logical vocabulary could be thus reformed, there would be one less occasion for throwing stones at the despised logicians.

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¹ This JOURNAL, Vol. XVIII., No. 9.